

CHAPTER 14

Transportation

Introduction

The City of Lynchburg lies at a significant crossroads of major traffic corridors within the State of Virginia. Primary highways to the City include US Route 29, US Route 460, and US Route 501. Historically, these traffic corridors have been focused on routing traffic through the City of Lynchburg rather than around it. Such traffic patterns and trends can have profound impacts on neighborhoods, access corridors, and the economic viability of the City and the region.

The City also has a long history of providing mass transit for its residents, beginning in the 1890s. Today, the Greater Lynchburg Transit Company provides bus service from a central hub at the Plaza Shopping Center.

During the development of this Plan, public input on transportation issues focused principally on certain specific aspects of the existing and projected transportation system: “gateway” issues related to the US Route 29 bypass and its effect on access to downtown and the City in general; isolated areas of congestion during high traffic periods; “cut-through” traffic at the neighborhood level; integration of various alternative transportation modes including rail, transit, bicycle, and pedestrian; access to the City's historic and cultural resources using the various transportation modes; and aesthetic design standards for roadway and other transportation improvements.

The City recognizes the critical relationship between transportation and land use planning. The primary goal of this transportation element is to provide the citizens of Lynchburg with safe, efficient, effective, and well-planned transportation systems and facilities that enhance economic development and redevelopment opportunities while preserving the integrity and character of the affected neighborhoods, historic districts, and natural areas.

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Context and Recommendations

Transportation Planning Efforts

The Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) drives most of the regional transportation efforts that have an impact on the City. The Metropolitan Planning Organization (Region 2000 Regional Commission), the Virginia Commonwealth Transportation Board (CTB), the Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation (VDRPT), the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), and area counties (Amherst, Bedford, and Campbell) and cities (Bedford City) are also heavily involved. The primary mechanism for transportation planning in the region is the Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) that is developed by the Region 2000 Regional Commission and covers the City of Lynchburg along with the urbanized areas around the City. The LRTP outlines all of the transportation needs for the area that can be funded for the next 25 years, based on a needs assessment. This assessment is based on computer models and traffic forecasts. The LRTP covers roadways, transit, bicycle and pedestrian facilities, air transportation, passenger rail service, and goods movement.

The LRTP is implemented through the Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP), a six-year plan that includes both priorities and funding for projects identified in the LRTP. Once a project has been included in the TIP, it is scheduled for implementation.

The Phase I Planning Context & Preliminary Inventory Report summarized the many mechanisms by which large transportation projects are developed and implemented. A concern over the years has been the feeling that the City had very limited input into the development of major transportation initiatives in the region. One focus of this Transportation Element is to improve the level of communication between the City and transportation authorities and to influence transportation initiatives affecting the City. The need for continued and improved communication and coordination with VDOT and other transportation planning authorities was echoed by the public during the Plan development process. Transportation projects of particular public interest include the Crosstown Connector, the US Route 29 bypass, access to the Kemper Street Station, improvements to infrastructure, and various transportation projects with impacts on the Downtown area.

The City should continue to participate in regional efforts driven by VDOT, the Region 2000 Regional Commission, the Greater Lynchburg Transit Company (GLTC), the Lynchburg Regional Airport, Amherst County, Appomattox County, Bedford County, and Campbell County.

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GLTC Trolley at Kemper Street Station.

Transportation Master Plan

The City should develop and adopt a Transportation Master Plan (TMP) that would establish short- and long-term transportation priorities. The TMP will provide a mechanism for evaluating proposed transportation projects. The evaluation will include issues in addition to roadway capacity, including impacts on neighborhoods, economic development and redevelopment areas, historic districts, scenic corridors, and environmentally sensitive areas. The TMP will incorporate alternative transportation modes, including public transit, bicycle routes, and pedestrian routes and will provide the basis for consistency between City and VDOT transportation planning. At the present time, VDOT is using the transportation portion of the City's 1984 General Plan. This document no longer reflects the City's transportation programs or needs. In order for VDOT to take the City's needs into account in planning for the region, the City needs to have an up-to-date TMP that incorporates those needs and is adopted by City Council. An adopted TMP would serve as the basis for the LRTP, since the City is the center of the urbanized area covered by the LRTP. In other words, rather than have the City's transportation plans dictated by VDOT based on an outdated plan and ignorance of the City's wishes, preparing and adopting a TMP will provide useful information for VDOT.

The Transportation Master Plan will also provide a mechanism for developing roadway and design standards to be used in evaluating VDOT and non-VDOT transportation improvements. The design standards will provide a technical and aesthetic basis for evaluating transportation improvements and will include provisions requiring such features as on-street parking, landscaping, medians, traffic calming mechanisms, appropriate levels of service, and system networking and continuity. It will also provide the City with tangible and measurable standards for evaluating development projects and their impacts on the local transportation network.

Transportation***Roadway Design***

Although improvements to roadways primarily address capacity, safety, or efficiency issues, they are also an opportunity to create roadways that are of quality design. The Transportation Master Plan should include design elements such as on-street parking, landscaping, medians, traffic calming measures, narrower lanes, sidewalks, and other features as appropriate. The TMP should also include strategies to improve safety conditions, such as developing a program to monitor high-accident intersections or roadways and developing access management guidelines for development.



Pedestrian-friendly sidewalk.

Transportation Improvements

One focus of the Comprehensive Plan and the Transportation Master Plan will be the improvement of transportation corridors. Many of the corridors in the City (e.g., 5th Street, 12th Street, Main Street, Memorial Avenue, and others) are both functioning roadways and contributors to the character of the City. These corridors help to define the character of the City and to shape neighborhoods.

When planning improvements to these roadways, it can be difficult to strike the appropriate balance between sufficient traffic capacity and preservation of neighborhood character. Many residents have indicated that they want these corridors to continue looking as they do today; they are concerned that roads can be widened to serve traffic that originates outside the City. The example cited most frequently is the widening of the section of Fort Avenue beginning at the intersection with Memorial Avenue. Residents of adjacent neighborhoods are very disappointed with the design of the newly widened road—the loss of the tree canopy and installation of unattractive metal railings—and also with the resulting “speedway” effect—the tendency for traffic to speed through the area. To help avoid this type of “improvement,” this Comprehensive Plan delineates those streets that are part of the fabric of

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the City neighborhoods and recommends that they be widened only as a last resort. A series of alternative methods, known as transportation system management techniques, will be offered to lessen or eliminate the need for widening. The TMP will contain a series of street profiles that feature more appropriate designs.

Rail Service

Three rail lines provide passenger and freight service to the City. Norfolk Southern Railway provides freight service extending north/south and east/west from the City, while CSX Railway carries freight along the James River. Amtrak, operating on Norfolk Southern tracks, provides passenger service. Industrial development has benefited from and still relies on rail service to ship raw and finished products. The City should encourage the use of rail as a cost-effective means of transporting goods.



Railroads in Downtown Lynchburg.

The newly renovated Kemper Street Station serves as the City's main transfer point for Amtrak passenger rail service and Greyhound Bus service. Opportunities to expand the level of rail service provided by Amtrak should be pursued, as should opportunities to support development of the TransDominion Express.

Lynchburg Regional Airport

Another key goal of the Plan encourages greater utilization and further development of the Lynchburg Regional Airport as the provider of air service to the region. Accessible and affordable air service will improve the economic vitality of the City and region, encouraging economic development and attracting employers to the City. The funding of the operating budget and the loss of scheduled airline service are concerns related to the airport.

The airport's current master plan includes limited improvements to maintain the existing level of service to the region. The City should consider

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expanding the airport's ability to serve larger aircraft, regional commercial jet service, freight, and general aviation clients. Expanded access to the airport on public transit is also needed. There is also the potential for creation of an industrial park next to the airport.



Lynchburg Regional Airport.

Goals, Objectives & Strategies

Goal 1. Provide the citizens of Lynchburg with safe, efficient, effective, and well-planned transportation systems and facilities that enhance economic development and redevelopment opportunities while preserving the integrity and character of the affected neighborhoods, historic districts, downtown, and natural areas.

Objective 1.A. Transportation Master Plan. Establish short- and long-term transportation priorities through the development of a comprehensive City Transportation Master Plan.

- 1) Include Level of Service Standards and Functional Classifications for roads within the City.
- 2) Incorporate the Comprehensive Plan Future Land Use Map and elements. Ensure compatibility between development/preservation goals and roadway levels of service.
- 3) Assure consistency between Comprehensive Plan land use and population policies with the traffic model utilized for the Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP).
- 4) Monitor LRTP and Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP) impacts on neighborhoods, economic development and redevelopment areas, historic districts, and environmentally sensitive areas. Monitor implementation of the TIP and evaluate any inconsistencies or conflicts with the Comprehensive Plan or TMP.
- 5) Identify corridors within the City where rights-of-way should be preserved for roads, bikeways, and pedestrian ways.
- 6) Incorporate Greater Lynchburg Transit Company's plans to encourage the coordination of bus routes with other transportation modes.
- 7) Priorities for improvements to the transportation system should be based on safety considerations; existing deficiencies; multimodal and environmental considerations; physical, economic, and policy constraints; contribution to quality urban design; required right-of-way needs; level of service; and appropriate system continuity.
- 8) Include alternative transportation modes in the TMP, including pedestrians, bikeways, trails, and transit.
- 9) Review the Transportation Master Plan annually and complete updates at least every five years. Updates should be completed in time for the MPO to use them when developing the LRTP and the TIP.

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Objective 1.B. Design of Roadways. Design new roadways and improve existing roadways in such a way that sufficient capacity is provided while maintaining quality urban design. Prior to the issuance of a development or building permit, address and resolve any roadway issue that would create or exacerbate a significant safety hazard in the transportation system.

- 1) New roadways shall be designed to provide capacity efficiently, while maintaining quality urban design. This shall include elements such as on-street parking, landscaping, medians, other green areas, traffic calming, narrower lanes, roundabouts, controlled or limited access, sidewalks, aesthetic accents, bus pull-out bays, and other design forms, as appropriate.
- 2) No development order or building permit shall be issued that creates or exacerbates a significant safety hazard in the transportation system. The developer may be required to prepare a traffic study to determine whether the proposed development will create or exacerbate a significant safety hazard. The developer shall mitigate any adverse impact and provide safe and adequate access.
- 3) Develop a program to identify and monitor high-accident intersections or roadways.
 - a) Continue to use collected data to allocate Capital Improvement Program funds for individual projects to improve safety.
 - b) In specific locations of need, implement minor adjustments to signalization, routing, marking, lighting, signage, and so on that may improve safety conditions.
 - c) Actively pursue grant funds to finance improvements at problem intersections.
- 4) Develop Access Management Guidelines for new development, redevelopment, and roadway projects.
 - a) Promote and require shared and joint access between sites.
 - b) Promote adequate driveway and median opening spacing to minimize vehicular conflicts.
 - c) Promote access points on side streets instead of major arterials to preserve capacity on major roadways and require developers to align their driveways with existing adjacent streets/driveways.

Objective 1.C. Preservation of Existing Road Corridors. Preserve the City's history and protect neighborhoods by maintaining the character of existing road corridors.

- 1) The following roadways shall not be widened through the addition of lanes or the removal of existing parking lanes to permit increased traffic flow unless no other alternatives can be found and the City Council approves the widening:
 - a) Fifth Street, from the Lynch Bridge to Memorial Avenue
 - b) Twelfth Street, from Commerce Street to Fort Avenue
 - c) Rivermont Avenue, from the Blackwater Creek bridge to VES Road
 - d) Boonsboro Road, from VES Road to US Route 501
 - e) Boonsboro Road, from US Route 501 to the Western Corporate Boundary
 - f) Langhorne Road, from Rivermont Avenue to Memorial Avenue
 - g) Link Road, from Boonsboro Road to Old Forest Road
 - h) Trent's Ferry Road, from Boonsboro Road to the Northern Corporate Boundary
 - i) Memorial Avenue, from Fifth Street to Fort Avenue
 - j) Fort Avenue, from Park Avenue/Kemper Street to Memorial Avenue
- 2) Consider transportation systems management (TSM) techniques to improve traffic flow on these roads before approving additional lanes or removal of parking lanes. Examples of TSM include: signal optimization, turn lanes at intersections, reversible lanes, and other measures.

Objective 1.D. Neighborhood Traffic. Ensure that traffic conditions do not degrade neighborhood quality.

- 1) Consider neighborhood-level impacts of transportation projects during preparation of Neighborhood

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Conservation Plans (see Chapter 4, Plan Framework) and employ traffic calming techniques to control cut-through and speeding traffic.

Objective 1.E. Access to Downtown. Improve access to Downtown areas from neighborhoods and gateways to the City, per the Downtown and Riverfront Master Plan 2000.

- 1) Provide clear direction for traffic flow into the Downtown, especially upon ultimate construction of the US Route 29 bypass, and from US Route 501, Boonsboro/Rivermont.
- 2) Provide streetscape enhancements along boulevards into the Downtown area.
- 3) Encourage greater availability of transit and pedestrian access to the Downtown from adjacent neighborhoods, through the use of Transit-Oriented Development principles and other techniques.
- 4) Encourage a connection from the Downtown area to the City's greenway, blueway, trail, and bikeway networks.
- 5) Develop additional parking spaces in the Downtown area, as recommended in the Downtown and Riverfront Master Plan 2000, using on-street parking and structured parking, rather than surface lots.

Objective 1.F. Participation & Coordination. Maximize opportunities for participation by City staff and the public in City and regional transportation planning initiatives.

- 1) Improve coordination of transportation planning efforts with the Virginia Department of Transportation, the Region 2000 Regional Commission (MPO), the Greater Lynchburg Transit Company (GLTC), Amherst County, Bedford County, Campbell County, and the Lynchburg Regional Airport, as applicable.
- 2) Encourage and solicit citizen and neighborhood-level input, including:
 - a) Emphasis on early involvement—prior to the public notice/right of way stage of project development.
 - b) Neighborhood outreach through community groups and associations.

Objective 1.G. Special Consideration for Nondrivers. Consider, during all transportation planning efforts, the needs of nondrivers, including the young, the elderly, and the disabled, among others.

Goal 2. Develop and encourage opportunities for the integration of alternative transportation modes, including public transit, bicycle, and pedestrian corridors.

Objective 2.A. Intermodal Integration. In evaluating planned transportation improvements, consider impacts to and opportunities for intermodal integration.

- 1) Compare the Central Virginia Metropolitan Planning Organization's Comprehensive Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan and Chapter 5, Citywide Land Use & Development, with development patterns at least every five years to determine if changes are needed.
- 2) Require new development or redevelopment to be coordinated with public transit, bicycle, and pedestrian systems, where applicable.

Objective 2.B. Enhancement. Develop opportunities to enhance alternative transportation facilities.

- 1) Create opportunities for improving pedestrian access to the historic districts and the Downtown.
- 2) Create opportunities for improving pedestrian access to greenways and stream corridors.
- 3) Encourage improvement of public transit access to the historic districts and the Downtown.
- 4) Develop strategies, such as provision of parking lots, to promote the use of public transit.
- 5) Coordinate with the Greater Lynchburg Transit Company (GLTC) as necessary for updates to the Greater Lynchburg Transit Development Plan.
- 6) Prepare a citywide pedestrian improvement plan that addresses the need for sidewalks throughout the City and incorporates existing policies on sidewalk maintenance and the provision of new sidewalks.

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During preparation of this plan, evaluate whether existing policies need to be revised. During pedestrian improvement planning, incorporate ADA requirements.

7) Prepare a citywide bicycle plan, in cooperation with the MPO.

Objective 2.C. Compatibility. Ensure the compatibility of the Future Land Use Map with existing rail and public transportation service.

Objective 2.D. Regional Transit Authority. Explore the feasibility of developing a regional transit authority in cooperation with the surrounding counties.

Goal 3. Commit adequate resources to the operation and maintenance of existing and future transportation facilities.

Objective 3.A. System Needs. As part of the development and update process for the City Transportation Master Plan, evaluate the condition of the existing transportation facilities and make appropriate recommendations for addressing needs.

- 1) Include recommendations for funding the operation and maintenance of transportation facilities in the Transportation Master Plan and subsequent updates.
- 2) Allocate funding to the maximum extent feasible to meet the operation and maintenance needs identified in the Transportation Master Plan.
- 3) Explore the feasibility of developing a regional intelligent transportation system in conjunction with the MPO and VDOT.

Goal 4. Provide increased regional passenger and freight railroad transportation.

Objective 4.A. Amtrak Passenger Rail Service. Work with Amtrak to continue and expand, if possible, passenger rail service through Lynchburg.

Objective 4.B. TransDominion Express. Support the effort to initiate regional rail service, using Lynchburg as a hub.

Objective 4.C. Rail Freight. Encourage use of rail freight as a cost-effective means of transporting freight.

Goal 5. Support efforts to make the Lynchburg Regional Airport more attractive to passenger and freight clients.

Objective 5.A. Independent Airport Authority. Explore the feasibility of establishing an independent airport authority.

- 1) Develop a cost- and revenue-sharing agreement with Campbell County to facilitate creation of the authority.
- 2) Develop existing property adjacent to the airport into an industrial park.

Objective 5.B. City/Campbell County Boundary Adjustment. Explore the feasibility of entering into an agreement with Campbell County for a voluntary boundary line adjustment to bring the airport into the City.

Objective 5.C. Airport Use. Continue to expand and improve airport facilities and to offer competitive rates and services.

- 1) Accelerate the Airport Master Plan to extend the main runway to accommodate larger aircraft and new regional jets, in order to encourage increased air freight and the use of regional jets for passenger service.
- 2) Explore opportunities to attract general aviation clients by providing, for example, more hangar space and additional amenities for corporate and private jets.

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- 3) Pursue opportunities to attract a low-fare passenger airline or a commuter feeder.
- 4) Continue efforts to keep passenger fares competitive while providing the services demanded by the traveling public.
- 5) Work with the Greater Lynchburg Transit Company to provide expanded bus service to/from the airport and the Downtown, hotels, and other appropriate locations.

Objective 5.D. Regional Airport. Explore the feasibility of a regional airport to serve Lynchburg and neighboring communities.